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March 12, 1952

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
The University of Wisconsin
College of Agriculture
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Doctor Lederberg:

My correspondence with you relative to your silica gel method of preserving bacterial cultures has admittedly been desultory, but quite unintentionally so. I am greatly interested in this process and appreciate your courtesy in bringing it to my attention and coaching me about it. We have not done more with it to date because our working force has been depleted by accidents and illness since mid-December, precluding consistent attention to anything beyond routine culture transfers and filling orders. We have not yet reactivated the Lisbonne-Carrère strain of E. coli and the indicator Shigella which you sent, as Dr. Bertani kindly furnished growing cultures of the same and Dr. Wyckoff was in a hurry to get them. The silica gel culture of E. coli that you sent me last September was inviable when tested five months later; but, as your circular letter implies, this process is not to be recommended as yet for long term storage. Even if the viability were preserved for only six months--which might be insured even with the present technique if refrigerated storage is employed, it would be a significant gain over our present transfer routine. It would also eliminate some present difficulties in sending cultures great distances by mail.

In order to carry on more extensive testing of the method, which our wide range of microorganisms certainly fits us to do, I am going to request a subsidy from the Washington Academy of Sciences. This will be only a small amount, but it will help to provide regular attention for this study instead of having it sidetracked so often in favor of routine tasks.

Thank you again for your cooperation. I will keep you informed of developments.

Sincerely yours,

Freeman A. Weiss

Freeman A. Weiss
Curator

FAW/ap